

in reflections on virtue, sufferings, destiny, and death ; and the sentiments expressed in his own name have often a melancholy tinge which renders them irresistibly interesting. He might seem to have felt a presage, while musing on the last of the Romans, that their poet was soon to follow them. The reader becomes devoted both to the poet, and to these illustrious men ; but, under the influence of this attachment, he adopts all their sentiments, and exults in the sympathy; forgetting, or unwilling, to reflect, whether this state of feeling be concordant with the religion of Christ, and with the spirit of the apostles and martyrs. The most captivating of Lucan's sentiments, to a mind enamoured of pensive sublimity, are those concerning death. I remember the very principle which I would wish to inculcate, that is, the necessity that a believer of the Gospel should preserve the Christian tenour of feeling predominant in his mind, and clear of incongruous mixture, having struck me with great force amidst the enthusiasm with which I read many times over the memorable account of Vulteius, the speech by which he inspired his gallant band with a passion for death, and the reflections on death with which the poet closes the episode. I said to myself, at the suggestion of conscience, What are these sentiments with which I am glowing ? Are these the just ideas of death ? Are they such as were taught by the Divine Author of our religion ? Is this the spirit with which St. Paul approached his last hour ? And I felt a painful collision between this reflection and the passion inspired by the poet. I perceived clearly that the kind of interest which I felt was no less than a real adoption, for the time, of the very same sentiments with which he was animated.

The epic poetry has been selected for the more pointed application of my remarks, from the belief that it has had a much greater influence on the moral sentiments of succeeding ages than all the other poetry of antiquity, by means of its impressive display of individual great characters. And it will be admitted that the moral spirit of the epic poets, taken together, is as little in opposition to the Christian theory of moral sentiments as that of the collective poetry of other kinds. Some just and fine sentiments to be found in the Greek tragedies are in the tone of the best of the pagan didactic moralists. And they infuse